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FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK NO. 69
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FEBRUARY 13, 1976

COVERING THE ECONOMY (TV GUIDE)
SENIOR VOLUNTEERS (PARKS AND RECREATION)

ANNCR: HERE IS ----- WITH FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK --
VOICE OF AMERICA SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES ON TIMELY
TOPICS FROM AMERICAN MAGAZINES. TODAY: SOME NOTES
ON HOW AMERICAN TELEVISION NEWS COVERS THE ECONOMY,
FROM TV GUIDE; AND A STORY OF SENIOR VOLUNTEERS
FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MAGAZINE."

REPORTER: FOR MANY YEARS TELEVISION NEWS IN THE UNITED STATES
TENDED TO IGNORE SUBJECTS LIKE ECONOMICS BECAUSE
THEY WERE STATIC...BECAUSE THERE WAS LITTLE ACTION
ASSOCIATED WITH THE SUBJECT THAT COULD BE EASILY
CAPTURED ON FILM. BUT AS N-B-C NEWS ECONOMICS
CORRESPONDENT, IRVING R. LEVINE WRITES IN TV GUIDE
THAT CHANGED DRAMATICALLY IN 1971:

VOICE: "SUDDENLY THE POCKETBOOK INTERESTS OF VIEWERS OUTWEIGHED
THE LACK OF VISUAL EXCITEMENT. IF ANY ONE DATE IS THE
1492 (LANDMARK) OF TELEVISION'S 'DISCOVERY OF THE
ECONOMY' IT'S AUGUST 15, 1971. ON THAT EVENING
PRESIDENT NIXON ANNOUNCED WAGE-AND-PRICE CONTROLS AND
OTHER MEASURES TO FIGHT INFLATION."

REPORTER: MISTER LEVINE EXPLAINS THAT AS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND
CONCERNS OF AMERICANS GREW, SO DID THEIR NEED TO UNDER-
STAND THE FORCES AFFECTING THEIR LIVES. SOON THERE
WERE NEW CLICHES IN TELEVISION NEWS: PICTURES OF FOOD
MARKET CASH REGISTERS SHOWING INCREASING FOOD PRICES,

REPORTER: AND LONG LINES OF AUTOMOBILES AT GAS STATIONS
(CONT)

DEPICTING THE ENERGY CRISIS. THE SITUATION ALSO
PROMPTED A NEW GENRE OF TELEVISION ART: LINES AND
ARROWS TRACING THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, THE UNEMPLOYMENT
RATE AND LITERALLY DOZENS OF CHARTS, GRAPHS AND OTHER
VISUALS TO MAP PROGRESS -- OR LACK OF PROGRESS --
IN THE "FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION."

SOON, MISTER LEVINE REPORTS, TELEVISION NEWS STARTED
LEARNING HOW TO BE MORE VISUAL IN REPORTING ECONOMICS
PROBLEMS, MAINLY BY FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC SITUATIONS:

VOICE: "...WE TRANSLATED ONE MONTH'S CLIMB IN CONSUMER PRICES
INTO HUMAN TERMS BY FILMING THE DIFFICULTIES OF A FAMILY
OF MEDIAN INCOME LIVING WITHIN A BUDGET. AS THE
YOUNG HOUSEWIFE WASHED CARROTS FROM THE FAMILY'S
BACK-YARD GARDEN, SHE COMPLAINED THAT RISING FOOD
PRICES HAD MADE IT NECESSARY TO DRAW ON THE FAMILY'S
SAVINGS. 'WE THOUGHT OUR SAVINGS WERE FOR A RAINY DAY
(EMERGENCY OR SPECIAL NEED).' SHE SAID. THEN IN A
GLUM AFTER THOUGHT: 'BUT I GUESS THIS IS OUR RAINY
DAY.'

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"TO ILLUSTRATE FIGURES ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE
UNITED STATES, WE FILMED A JAPANESE-OWNED SOY-SAUCE
FACTORY IN THE FARM HEARTLAND OF WALWORTH, WISCONSIN.
AMERICAN VETERANS OF PEARL HARBOR AND IWO JIMA (WORLD
WAR II BATTLES IN THE PACIFIC) WERE WORKING ON A
SOY-SAUCE BOTTLING LINE, SUPERVISED BY JAPANESE FOREMEN."

REPORTER: MISTER LEVINE POINTS OUT THAT UNLIKE COVERING THE PENTAGON, C-I-A AND STATE DEPARTMENT, THERE IS LITTLE SECRECY AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF EXCELLENT ECONOMIC NEWS SOURCES.

FOR ONE THING, ECONOMISTS IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT AND ANALYSIS OF TRENDS AND FIGURES. MISTER LEVINE WRITES:

VOICE: "PRESTIGIOUS EXPERTS AT BANKS, CONSULTING FIRMS AND UNIVERSITIES ARE ALSO ACCESSABLE AND OFTEN EAGER TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS. ECONOMICS MAY BE THE 'DISMAL SCIENCE' BUT IT IS AN OPEN ONE."

REPORTER: BUT MISTER LEVINCE WARNS AGAINST TAKING AS GOSPEL THE STATEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT ECONOMISTS WHO OFTEN INTERPRET ECONOMIC EVENTS IN POLITICAL TERMS. THAT APPLIES TO DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS.

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VOICE: HE NOTES: "FORD ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS WERE DETERMINED TO AVOID THE POLITICALLY DAMAGING WORD, 'RECESSION' BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 1974 ELECTIONS. INSTEAD, CABINET OFFICERS DESCRIBED THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY AS 'STAGFLATION' AND 'SLUMPFLATION.' THE MOST ORIGINAL TERM WAS COINED BY FORMER COMMERCE SECRETARY FREDERICK DENT WHO SAID THE ECONOMY WAS 'WAFFLING SIDEWAYS. ALLAN GREENSPAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE (PRESIDENT'S) COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS, RESORTED TO GOBBLEDYGOOK (CONFUSING LANGUAGE) BY CONCEDED A 'POSSIBLY marginally negative type OF WEAKNESS IN THE ECONOMY.'" |

REPORTER: MISTER LEVINE SAYS, THE ECONOMIC NEWS CIRCUIT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS HAZARDS. HE TELLS THE STORY OF ONE ECONOMICS REPORTER WHO INTERVIEWED THE AMBASSADOR OF IRAN ABOUT OIL PRICES:

"LATER THAT DAY THE REPORTER RECEIVED AN ALARMED TELEPHONE CALL FROM HOME. HIS WIFE REPORTED THAT A... MAN HAD JUST DELIVERED A SMALL, BOMB-SHAPED PACKAGE... IN THE ERA OF LETTER BOMBS, THE REPORTER'S WIFE HAD PRUDENTLY RUSHED THE PACKAGE INTO A BACK-YARD TRASH CAN. THE REPORTER HURRIED HOME TO RETRIEVE THE PACKAGE... A CONTAINER FILLED WITH PELLETS, NOT OF EXPLOSIVES BUT OF IRANIAN CAVIAR."

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REPORTER: MOST WORKING PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES RETIRE AT THE AGE OF SIXTY-FIVE. BUT MERRELL CLARK, WRITING IN PARKS AND RECREATION MAGAZINE SAYS THAT WHEN PEOPLE TURN SIXTY-FIVE, THEY DON'T RETIRE FROM LIFE. MISTER CLARK SUGGESTS THAT RETIREMENT SHOULD REALLY MEAN THE END OF ONE CAREER AND THE START OF ANOTHER. HE WRITES: "FOR MANY, THE NEW CAREER IS VOLUNTEER SERVICE. AFTER ALL, THERE IS NO AGE LIMIT ON THE DUTY TO SERVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AND COMMUNITY. AND, SOCIAL SECURITY (GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS TO RETIRED PEOPLE), PENSIONS AND SAVINGS REDUCE THE PRESSURE (ON RETIRED PEOPLE) TO EARN MONEY WHILE WORKING."

REPORTER: MORE THAN FOUR MILLION AMERICANS NOW SIXTY-FIVE OR OLDER ARE NOW WORKING AS VOLUNTEERS, LENDING THEIR EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS TO PROJECTS THAT, IF NOT STAFFED

REPORTER: BY VOLUNTEERS, WOULD GO UNDONE. AT THE AGE OF
(CONT) SIXTY-FIVE, AFTER FORTY YEARS OF EARNING A LIVING,
THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO FOR
OTHERS.

A LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA ORGANIZATION CALLED DOVES
(DEDICATED OLDER VOLUNTEERS IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES)
HAS ENLISTED MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED SENIOR AMERICANS
TO SERVE IN CITY SCHOOLS. MISTER CLARK CITES THE
EXAMPLE OF AN EIGHTY-THREE YEAR OLD RETIRED BUSINESS-
MAN. THE OCTOGENARIAN SAYS:

"AT NIGHT I GO BACK TO THE RETIREMENT HOME WHERE
PEOPLE END THEIR LIVES. BUT IN THE MORNING, I GO TO
SCHOOL TO HELP CHILDREN BUILD THEIR LIVES. IT GIVES ME
A REASON TO GET UP TO THE MORNING AND A REASON TO LIVE."

REPORTER: TEACHERS, REPORTS MISTER CLARK, ARE EAGER TO HAVE
RETIRED CITIZENS WORKING IN CLASSROOMS, PROVIDING
PERSONALIZED HELP TO STUDENTS, TO HELP CHILDREN
GAIN A PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE, TO ILLUMINATE AND
MAKE REAL EARLIER PERIODS OF HISTORY AND TO TEACH
SPECIAL SKILLS.

IRONICALLY, SAYS MISTER CLARK, THERE ARE MILLIONS OF
AMERICANS SIXTY-FIVE OR OLDER WHO WANT TO DO VOLUNTEER
WORK, BUT WHO HAVE NOT BEEN ASKED. AND THE REASON
WHY?

VOICE: "OUR COUNTRY HAS CHANGED ALMOST WITHOUT REALIZING IT. WE USED TO BE VIRTUALLY ALL YOUNG. BUT NOW MORE OF US LIVE LONGER. THERE SIMPLY ARE MORE OLD AMERICANS THAN THERE USED TO BE. IN FACT, THERE ARE AS MANY AMERICANS SIXTY-FIVE AND OLDER AS THERE ARE CANADIANS OF ALL AGES. OLDER PEOPLE TODAY ARE MUCH BETTER EDUCATED AND HEALTHIER THAN THE OLDER PEOPLE OF A GENERATION AGO. MANY ARE HIGHLY SKILLED AND JUST AS ABLE AND ENERGETIC IN THEIR SEVENTIES AS THEY WERE IN THEIR FORTIES."

REPORTER: ANOTHER REASON OLDER CITIZENS HAVE BEEN IGNORED AS VALUABLE RESOURCES IS THAT PEOPLE WHO ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS ARE USED TO RELYING ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND HOUSEWIVES AND THAT HABIT IS SLOW TO CHANGE. BUT THIS IS CHANGING, WRITES MISTER CLARK.

VOICE: "THE CREATIVE LEADERS IN OUR SOCIETY ARE LEARNING FAST. WHATEVER THE COMMUNITY NEED, THERE IS ELDER EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH IT. WHAT IS YOUR NEED? SUPERVISION OF RECREATION PROGRAMS? BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS IN PARKS? TUTORIAL OR COUNSELING SERVICES? LEGAL ASSISTANCE? WHATEVER THE NEED, TURN TO THE ABLE ELDERS OF YOUR COMMUNITY."

REPORTER: MISTER CLARK'S CONCLUSION: VOLUNTARISM HAS COME OF AGE.

ANNCR: YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK, SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES ON TIMELY TOPICS FROM MAGAZINES PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY YOU

ANNCR:
(CONT)

HEARD HOW AMERICAN TELEVISION HAS LEARNED TO
REPORT ECONOMICS NEWS, FROM TV GUIDE; AND HOW OLDER
CITIZENS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY AFTER THEIR RETIREMENT,
FROM PARKS AND RECREATION. NEXT WEEK (AT THIS TIME) MORE
SELECTIONS FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK. YOUR REPORTER WAS .

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